

REMARKS

With the cancellation of claim 2, claims 1 and 3-28 are pending. Claims 1, 13, 17, and 20 have been amended to include the limitation recited in previously presented claim 2. Descriptive support for the amendments can be found at least in page 56, lines 21-23 of the specification.

Applicants thank Examiner Robinson for indicating that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara (U.S. 2002/0127395) in view of Ferguson (U.S. 4,950,052); claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Sato et al. (JP 2004-202899); claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Taki et al. (US 6,703,138); claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Oya (US 2003/0186040); claims 10 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Moriwaki et al. (US 2003/0021935); claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Kumano et al. (JP 2003-127310); claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9, and 13, and further in view of Kubo (US 6,770,430); claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1-4, 9, and 13, and further in view of Ogawa et al. (US 2004/0071883); claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9 and 13, and further in view of Kumano et al. (JP 2003-127310); claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as

applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Iwasaki et al. (US 4,948,635); claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claim 17, and further in view of Ogawa; claims 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1 and 13, and further in view of Iwasaki; claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claim 20, and further in view of Ogawa; claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claim 20, and further in view of Kubo; claims 26-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, 9, and 13, and further in view of Shouji et al. (US 5,691,838); claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kuwabara in view of Ferguson as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Hanada et al. (US 6,734,946). Applicants traverse the rejections.

Without conceding to the propriety of the obviousness rejections of claims 1 and 3-28 and in order to expedite prosecution, independent claims 1, 13, 17, and 20 have been amended to include the limitation recited in previously presented claim 2. Because the Office Action indicates that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim, claims 1, 13, 17, and 20 (and all claims dependent therefrom), as amended, should also be allowable. Withdrawal of the obviousness rejections is respectfully requested.

Objection to Claim 2

Claim 2 was objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claim 2 has been cancelled, rendering the objection moot.

CONCLUSION

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned regarding any questions concerning this amendment. In the event that the filing of this paper is deemed not timely, applicants petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is authorized to debit Deposit Account No. 11-0600 the petition fee and any other fees that may be required in relation to this paper.

Respectfully submitted,
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